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TAGS: [OPRC](#) [KMDR](#) [KPAO](#) [TW](#)

SUBJECT: MEDIA REACTION: CROSS-STRAIT RELATIONS

1. Summary: Taiwan dailies continued May 12 to spend pages reporting on PFP Chairman James Soong's speech at Beijing's Tsinghua University Wednesday and his meeting with Chinese President Hu Jintao today. The pro-unification "United Daily News" printed a banner headline on its front page that said "Soong and Hu will discuss the new contents of the 1992 Consensus today." The sub-headline added: "Conclusion of the meeting will be put into words and possibly issued in the form of a joint statement or a communiqué. PFP suggested that a military buffer zone be set up [in the Taiwan Strait]. The Presidential Office rushed to deny the 1992 Consensus yesterday." The centrist "China Times" also carried a news story on its front page that read: "Soong-Hu meeting today will find a common ground for the contents of the 1992 Consensus." The pro-independence "Taiwan Daily" headlined in its front page: "Soong and Hu will meet today; Bian and [former President] Lee [Teng-hui] will strike out," and its sub-headline said: "[Bian and Lee] will comment on the remarks and behaviors of Lien and Soong in China via a TV interview and an international press conference, respectively." Taiwan's biggest daily, the pro-independence "Liberty Times," however, reported on its second page the Presidential Office's response to Soong's speech and his meeting with Hu today, which headlined: "Presidential Office: Soong has overstepped the consensus reached between Bian and Soong."

2. Several newspapers editorialized on Lien's and Soong's speeches in China. The "Liberty Times" editorial said Lien and Soong have disparaged Taiwan's most valuable assets of democracy and freedom, while the "Taiwan Daily" gave a higher evaluation of Soong's speech than Lien Chan's but criticized him for ruling out the independence option for the Taiwan people. The "United Daily News" editorial elaborated on Soong's speech and called for a common vision for both sides of the Taiwan Strait. A "China Times" news analysis discussed the Soong-Hu meeting today, noting that they can hardly find common ground because Chen has clearly denied in public any possibility to accept the 1992 Consensus. A limited-circulation, pro-independence English-language "Taipei Times" editorial commented on Taiwan's China fever and the recent inter-party strife of the DPP, asking if the United States is satisfied to see Taiwan bleeding and China gloating. End summary.

A) "Lien and Soong Must Not Produce an Erroneous Tragedy of Political Marriage"

The pro-independence "Liberty Times" [circulation: 800,000] editorialized (5/12):

"The visit to China by [KMT Chairman] Lien Chan, followed by that of [PFP Chairman] James Soong, has generated a China fever in Taiwan. Such a fever has not only undermined the anti-Communism values that have been cultivated in Taiwan over the past few decades but has jeopardized the foundation of Taiwan's democracy. In other words, it seems on the surface that Lien and Soong, who visited China in the capacity of opposition leaders and thus have no right to sign any agreement with China, will not be able to sell out Taiwan. But in reality, their trips are an echo of the waves of China's nationalism and patriotism and a move to disparage Taiwan's most valuable system and spiritual assets of democracy and freedom. People in the know are deeply concerned that the power of such an approach to strike a blow to Taiwan, which is tantamount to an invisible way to sell out Taiwan, will be even stronger than that of guns and missiles."

B) "Taiwan Consciousness Is the Sentiment to Identify with the People and Soil of Taiwan; This Can Only Be Secured by Independent Sovereignty"

The pro-independence "Taiwan Daily" [circulation: 150,000] commented in an editorial (5/12):

"Furthermore, Taiwan independence is, of course, a representation of Taiwan's sovereignty consciousness. It concretely reflects the actual sovereign jurisdiction and the universal values of civic awareness and self-determination. Therefore, both the ruling and opposition parties in Taiwan and the people and government across the Strait should fully respect the will of the 23 million people who live in Taiwan. James Soong's statement of cross-Strait unification came from historic sentiments and even ruled out the option of Taiwan independence by the Taiwan people. We strongly oppose to this and [believe] it quite disrespectful to the right of choice entitled to the people of Taiwan.

". We also agree that the Taiwan economic miracle and Taiwan experience being recognized by James Soong can become topics for cross-Strait exchanges and mutual learning in the foreseeable future. Certainly, despite the Lien-Hu meeting or the Soong-Hu meeting, there can only be more rational discussions and dialogue regarding cross-Strait political negotiations and bilateral relations when the gap of democratic maturity and economic conditions between the two sides is getting closer."

C) "Both [Tsinghua] Universities [in Beijing and Taipei] Share the Same Motto; Why Can't Both Sides of the Taiwan Strait Share the Same Vision?"

The pro-unification "United Daily News" [circulation: 600,000] editorialized (5/12):

". Maybe the two sides across the Strait do not need to hurry in determining each other's political designation by 'free interpretations of one China.' The reason is that whether it is called the 'old Three Principles of the People' or the 'new Three Principles of the People' at the level of ideas and ideals, as long as what is being longed for is the same direction and goal, why not start from the 'one common vision and free interpretations. .'"

D) "Soong [Seeks to] Build a Platform [Based on] the 1992 Consensus; But Bian and Hu Hardly Share the Same View"

Journalists Yang Yu-wen and Lin Hsin-hui noted in a news analysis of the centrist, pro-status quo "China Times" [circulation: 600,000] (5/12):

". The political coalition of President Chen and [PFP Chairman] James Soong has created a platform for dialogue between the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) and the DPP amid the one China disputes. But this platform is being shaken now due to the Pan-Green camp's recent backlashes and power struggle. Chen's remarks delivered prior to Soong's departure, which called Soong a 'messenger' and said there was a 10-point consensus between him and Soong but no consensus regarding the 1992 Consensus, have impaired Soong's credibility and the justification of his role to speak [on behalf of Chen]. Even if [Chinese President] Hu Jintao accepts Chen's view on the 1992 Consensus as conveyed by Soong, Chen has clearly denied in public any possibility to accept the 1992 Consensus. Thus the meeting between Soong and Hu is doomed to fail.

"The backlashes from the Pan-Green camp have made Chen feel highly uncertain [of the camp's support for him], and occasionally conflicts occur [inside the DPP] about who will be Chen's successor and which route [the DPP] should adopt. [Given such a situation,] even Beijing can understand it if Chen decides suddenly to return to his original route. Beijing did not expect to see a new foundation built immediately for both sides of the Taiwan Strait to resume talks. All [people] can do now is to wait until after [this Saturday's] National Assembly elections to see if Chen will clearly indicate his position in his speech slated for May 20, his inauguration anniversary. .

"Even if Soong fails to accomplish his task during this China trip, he has after all opened a window. On the cooperation platform built by the Pan-Blue camp and the CCP, various exchange and opening plans across the Taiwan Strait and relevant auxiliary measures can be scheduled immediately. Anti-Taiwan independence, insistence on the 1992 Consensus and pursuit for peace are the views commonly shared by the KMT, PFP and CCP, which, as time moves on, can be used as a strategy to change the public view and affect the position of the Pan-Green camp."

E) "Lack of Leadership Killing Taiwan"

The pro-independence, English-language "Taipei Times" [circulation: 30,000] commented in its editorial (5/12):

"Taiwan is facing a political situation that is not without its ironies. The Chinese Nationalist Party (KMT) has joined hands with the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) to isolate President Chen Shui-bian while, on the domestic front there is bloody inter-party strife. China doesn't need to do much more to create all-out political chaos in Taiwan. Meanwhile, resentment against KMT Chairman Lien Chan selling out Taiwan is building and could burst forth at any time. Is the US, which has sought to promote cross-strait peace at any cost, satisfied to see Taiwan bleeding and China gloating? .

"The situation could get even more thrilling. People First Party (PFP) Chairman James Soong will meet with Chinese President Hu Jintao in Beijing today. Who knows what tricks Hu has up his sleeve, or how Soong might respond? If Soong follows Lien's example of rolling over for Hu, domestic divisions might deepen. The Uriah Heep-like subservience of opposition leaders to China can only spark resentment from those who uphold 'Taiwan consciousness.' Already there are many on pro-independence Internet forums advocating an acceptance of war, if that's what it takes, to realize Taiwan's future. .

"And what will happen when Chen's position becomes untenable? If the opposition gains an even greater advantage in Saturday's [National Assembly] elections this can only delight China. The real casualty of Chen's political demise will be the nation's democracy."

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